

Journey of the Mind into God



by Saint Bonaventure of Bagnoregio

Prologue

1. In the beginning the First Principle, from whom all other illuminations descend as from the Father of lights, by whom is every best gift and every perfect gift, that is the Eternal Father, I do invoke through His Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, with the intercession of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the same Mother of Our God and Lord Jesus Christ, and of blessed Francis, our leader and father, to grant that the eyes of our mind (be) illumined to direct our feet in the way of His peace, which exceeds every sense; which peace Our Lord Jesus Christ has proclaimed and has given; the renewer of whose preaching was our Father Francis, announcing at the beginning and end of all his preaching peace, in every salutation choosing peace, in every contemplation longing towards ecstatic peace, as a citizen of that Jerusalem, concerning which that man of peace speaks, who with those who hate peace, was peaceable: Ask for those things which are for the peace of Jerusalem. For he knew, that the throne of Solomon was not but in peace, since it was written: In peace is made His place, and His dwelling in Sion.

2. When therefore by the example of most blessed Father Francis I sought with a panting spirit this peace, I a sinner, who, unworthy in all things ascend to the place of the most blessed father himself as seventh in the Minister generalship after his transitus; it happened that with the divine permission about the (time of) the Transitus of the Blessed himself, in the thirty-third year (of its celebration, 1259 A.D.), I turned aside with the love of seeking peace of spirit towards mount Alverna as towards a quiet place, and staying there, while I considered in mind some mental ascensions into God, among others there occurred that miracle, which in the aforesaid place happened to blessed

Francis himself, that is, of the vision of the Seraph winged after the likeness of the Crucified. In consideration of which it suddenly seemed to me, that that vision showed the suspension of our father himself in contemplating Him and the way, through which one arrives at that (suspension).

3. For through those six wings there can be rightly understood six suspensions of illumination, by which the soul as if to certain steps or journeys is disposed, to pass over to peace through ecstatic excesses of Christian wisdom. The way is, however, naught but through the most ardent love of the Crucified, who to this extent transformed Paul rapt to the third heaven into Christ, that he said: to Christ I have been crucified, now not I; but Christ lives in me; who also to this extent absorbed the mind of Francis, since the mind lay in the flesh, while he bore about the most sacred stigmata of the Passion in his own flesh for two years before his death. The likenesses of the six seraphic wings intimates six stair-like illuminations, which begin from creatures and lead through even to God, to Whom no one rightly enters except through the Crucified. For he who does not enter through the gate, but ascends by another way, that one is a thief and mercenary. If anyone indeed goes inside through the gate, he will step in and out and find pasture. On which account John says in the Apocalypse: Blessed are they who wash their vestments in the Blood of the Lamb, to have power in the Tree of life, and to step in the city through the gates ; as if he said, that through contemplation one cannot step into the supernal Jerusalem, unless he enter through the Blood of the Lamb as through a gate. For one has not been disposed in any manner to divine contemplations, which lead towards mental excesses, except with Daniel one be a man of desires. Moreover desires are inflamed in us in a two-fold manner, that is through the clamour of praying, which makes one shout from a groan of the heart, and though the lightning of speculation, by which the mind

thoroughly turns itself most directly and most intensely towards the rays of light.

4. Therefore to the groan of praying through Christ crucified, through whose Blood we are purged from the filth of vice, I indeed first invite the reader, lest perhaps he believes that reading without unction, speculation without devotion, investigation without admiration, circumspection without exultation, industry without piety, knowledge without charity, understanding without humility, study apart from divine grace, gaze apart from divinely inspired wisdom is sufficient for him. Anticipated, therefore, by divine grace, for the humble and pious, the devout, for those anointed with the oil of gladness both for the lovers of divine wisdom and for those inflamed with desire for it, I propose the following speculations to be free for those willing to magnify, admire and even take a taste of God, intimating, that too little or nothing is the proposed, exterior gaze, unless the mirror of our mind has been wiped and polished. Exert yourself, therefore, man of God, before the sting of conscience bites again, and before you raise your eyes towards the rays of wisdom glittering in His reflections, lest by chance from the sight itself of the rays you fall into the more grave pit of shadows.

5. Moreover it is pleasing to divide the tract into seven chapters, by previewing their titles for an easier understanding of the things to be said. I ask therefore, that the intention of the one writing be thought of more, than the work, more the sense of the things said than the uncultured speech, more its truth than its charm, more the exercise of affection than the erudition of the intellect. Because as it is, one must not run perfunctorily through the course of these speculations, but ruminate (on them) with the greatest of lingering.

**HERE BEGINS THE SIGHT OF THE POOR
MAN IN THE DESERT**

Chapter 1 - On the Steps of Ascension Into God and On the Sight of Him Through His Vestiges in the Universe

1. Blessed the man, whose assistance is from Thee, he has arranged ascensions in his own heart in the vale of tears, in the place, which he placed them. Since beatitude is nothing other, than the fruition of the Most High Good; and the Most High Good is above us: no one can become blessed, unless he ascends above his very self, not by an ascent with the body, but with the heart. But we are not able to be raised above ourselves unless by means of a superior virtue raising us. For however much as interior steps are arranged, nothing is done, unless the Divine Assistance accompanies. However the Divine Assistance accompanies those who seek it from their heart humbly and devoutly; and this is to long for it in this vale of tears, which is done through fervent praying. Let us pray therefore and say to the Lord Our God: Lead me forth, Lord, in Thy way, and let me step in Thy truth; let my heart be glad, that it fears Thy Name.

2. In praying this prayer one is illumined so as to become acquainted with the steps of the divine ascension. Since the universality of things is the stairway to ascend into God; and among things there are a certain vestige, a certain image, certain corporal things, certain spiritual things, certain temporal things, certain aeviternal things, and for this reason certain ones outside of us, certain ones inside us: for this purpose, that we arrive at considering the First Principle, which is most spiritual and eternal and above us, it is proper, that we enter into our mind, which is an aeviternal image of God, spiritual and within us, and this is to step in the truth of God; it is fitting, that we transcend to the eternal, most spiritual, and above us by looking towards the First Principle,

and this is to be glad in the knowledge of God and the reverence of His Majesty.

3. This is therefore the way of three days in the solitude; this is the threefold illumination of one day, and the first is as vespers, the second as morning, the third as midday; this relates to the threefold existence of things, that is in matter, in understanding and in the Eternal Art, according to what is said: Let it be, He has made and it has been made; this also relates to the threefold substance in Christ, who is our Stairway, that is the corporal, the spiritual, and the Divine.

4. According to this threefold progress our mind has three principle powers of sight. One is towards exterior corporals, according to that which is named the animal or the sensory: the other within the self and in the self, according to that which is called the spirit; the third above the self, according to that which is called the mind. - From all of which it ought to arrange itself to climb thoroughly into God, to love Him with a whole heart, and with a whole heart, and with a whole soul, in which consists the perfect observance of the Law and, at the same time with this, Christian wisdom.

5. Moreover since whatever of the aforesaid manners is joined together, according to which one happens to consider God as the Alpha and the Omega, or inasmuch as one happens to see God in any one of the aforesaid manners as through a mirror and as in a mirror, or because one of these considerations is has been mixed up with another conjoined with itself, and has to be considered in its purity; hence it is, that it is necessary, that these three principle steps ascend towards a group of six, so that, as God in six days perfected the entire world and on the seventh rested; so the microcosm is itself lead forth in six steps of illumination proceeding upwards in a most ordered manner towards the quiet of contemplation. In the figure of which one ascended

in six steps towards the throne of Solomon; the Seraphim, which Isaiah saw, had six wings; after six days the Lord called Moses from the midst of gloom, and Christ after six days, as is said in Matthew, led the disciples unto the mountain and was transfigured before them.

6. Therefore alongside the six steps of ascension into God, there are six steps of the soul's powers through which we climb thoroughly from the depths towards the heights, from exterior things towards things most interior, from temporal things we ascend together towards eternal, that is the sense, the imagination, the reason, the intellect, the intelligence, and the apex of the mind or the spark of synderesis. These steps we have planted in us by nature, deformed by fault, reformed by grace; are to be purged by justice, exercised by knowledge, perfected by wisdom.

7. For according to the first institution of nature there was created a man fit for the quiet of contemplation, and for that reason God placed him in the paradise of delights. But turning himself away from the true Light towards the completely changeable good, he was himself stooped down through his own fault, and his whole race by original sin, which infects human nature in a twofold manner, that is the mind by ignorance, the flesh by concupiscence; so that man thoroughly blinded and stooped down sits in the shadows and does not see the light of Heaven unless grace succors him with justice against his concupiscence, and knowledge with wisdom against his ignorance. Which is entirely done through Jesus Christ, who has been made for us by God our wisdom and justice and sanctification and redemption. Who though He be the Virtue of God and the Wisdom of God, (and though) He be the Incarnate Word full of grace and truth, has made grace and truth, that is has infused the grace of charity, which, since it is from a pure heart and a good conscience and an unfeigned faith, rectifies the whole

soul according to its own threefold, above-said power of sight; He has thoroughly taught the knowledge of the truth according to the threefold manner of theology, that is, the symbolic, the proper, and the mystical, so that through the symbol we rightly use the sensible, through the proper we rightly use the intelligible, through the mystical we be rapt to super-mental excesses.

8. Therefore it is necessary that he who will to ascend into God, as a nature having avoided the deforming fault, exercise his above-said, natural powers in accord with reforming grace, and this by praying; in accord with justifying purification and this in comportment; in accord with illuminating knowledge and this in meditation; in accord with perfecting wisdom and this in contemplation. Therefore as no one comes to wisdom except through grace, justice, and knowledge; so one does not come to contemplation except through perspicacious mediation, holy comportment and devout prayer. Therefore as grace is the foundation of the rectitude of the will and of the perspicacious brightening of the reason; so at first we must pray, then live holily, third understand the spectacles of truth and by understanding ascend gradually, and come at last to the exalted mountain, where there is seen the God of Gods in Sion.

9. Since therefore first one is to ascend rather than descend upon Jacob's stair, let us situate the first step of ascension at the bottom, by considering this whole world sensible to us as a mirror, through which we passover to God, the Most High Artisan, so that we may be true Hebrews passing over from Egypt to the land promised again and again to our Fathers, that we may be also Christians passing over with Christ from this world to the Father, that we may be also lovers of wisdom, who calls and says: Passover to me all you, who desire me, and be filled full by my generations. For from

the magnitude of beauty and creature the Creator of these things could be familiarly seen.

10. Moreover the highest power and wisdom and benevolence of the Creator glitters in created things according to that which the sense of the flesh announces in this threefold manner to the interior sense. For the sense of the flesh either devoutly serves the intellect in a rational manner as it investigates, or in a faithful manner as it believes, or in an intellectual manner as it contemplates. Contemplating it considers the actual existence of things, believing the habitual descent of things, reasoning the potential excellence of things.

11. In the first manner the power of sight of the one contemplating, considering the things in themselves, sees in them the weight, number and measure; the weight in regard to the position, where they are inclining, the number, by which they are distinguished, and the measure, by which they are limited. And for this reason it sees in them measure, species, and order, and also the substance, virtue, and activity. From which it can rise together, as from a vestige, to understand the power, wisdom and immense goodness of the Creator.

12. In the second manner the power of sight of the believer, considering this world attends to the origin, the descent and the end. For by faith we believe, that the ages have been made ready for the Word of life; by faith we believe, that the seasons of the three laws, that is of nature, of Scripture and of grace succeed one another and have descended in a most orderly manner; by faith we believe, that the world must be terminated by a final judgement; adverting in the first to power, in the second to providence, in the third to justice of the Most High Principle.

13. In the third manner the power of sight of the one investigating in a reasoning manner sees, that certain things only are, moreover that certain things are and live, but that certain things are, live, and discern; and indeed that the first things are the lesser, the second ones the middle, the third the best. - Again it sees, that certain things are only corporal, certain things partly corporal, partly spiritual; from which it adverts, that some are merely spiritual as the better and more worthy of both. Nevertheless it sees, that certain things are mutable and incorruptible, as the celestial things; from which it adverts, that certain things are immutable and incorruptible, as the super-celestial.

From these visible things, therefore, it rises up together to consider the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, as the existing, living, understanding, merely spiritual and incorruptible and intransmutable One.

14. Moreover this consideration broadens according to the septiform condition of creatures, which is the septiform testimony of the divine power and goodness, if the origin and order of all other things is considered.

For the origin of things according to (their) creation, distinction and embellishment, as much as it regards the works of the six days, foretells the divine power, producing all other things from nothing, (the divine) wisdom distinguishing all other things lucidly and (the divine) goodness adorning all other things with largess.

Moreover the magnitude of things according to the quantity of (their) length, breadth and depth; according to the excellence (their) virtue extending far, wide, and deeply, as is clear in the diffusion of light; according to the efficacy of (their) most interior, continual and diffuse activity, as is clear in the activity of fire, manifestly indicates the

immensity of the power, wisdom and goodness of the Triune God who in all other things by power, presence and essence exists as One uncircumscribed.

Indeed their multitude according to (their) general, special and individual diversity in substance, in form or figure and efficacious beyond every human estimation, manifestly intimates and shows the immensity of the aforesaid three conditions in God.

Moreover the beauty of things according to the variety of (their) lights, figures and colors in bodies simple, mixed and even connected, as in celestial and mineral bodies, as stones and metals, plants and animals, proclaims in an evident manner the aforesaid three things.

Moreover the fullness of things, according to which matter is full of forms according to seminal reasons; form is full of virtue according to active power; virtue is full of effects according to efficiency, manifestly declares the very thing.

The manifold activity (of things), according to that which is natural, according to that which is artificial, according to that which is moral, by its most manifold variety shows the immensity of His virtue, art, and goodness, which is for all things "the cause of existing, the reason for understanding and the order of living".

Moreover their order according to the reckoning of duration and influence, that is by prior and posterior, superior and inferior, more noble and more ignoble, manifestly intimates in the Book of Creatures the primacy, sublimity and dignity of the First Principle, as much as it regards the infinity of His power; indeed the order of divine laws, precepts, and judgements in the Book of Scripture the immensity of His wisdom; moreover the order of divine Sacraments,

benefactions and retributions in the Body of the Church the immensity of His goodness, so that the order itself most evidently leads us by hand to the First and Most High, the Most Powerful, the Most Wise and the Best. 15. Therefore he who is not brightened by such splendours of created things is blind; he who does not awake at such clamors is deaf; he who does not praise God on account of all these effects is mute; he who does not turn towards the First Principle on account of such indications is stupid. - Open therefore your eyes, employ your spiritual ears, loose your lips and rouse your heart, to see, hear, praise, love and worship, magnify and honor your God in all creatures, lest perhaps the whole circle of the earth rise together against you. For on this account the circle of the earth will fight against the insensate and against the sensate there will be the matter of glory, who according to the Prophet can say: Thou has loved me, Lord, in what you are to do and in the works of Thy hands shall I exult. How magnified are Thy works, Lord! you have made all things in wisdom, the earth is filled with Thy possession.

Chapter 2 - On the Sight of God in His Vestiges in This Sensible World

1. But since concerning the sensible reflection not only does it happen that God is contemplated through these as through vestiges, but also in these, inasmuch as He is in them through essence, power, and presence; and this is to consider Him higher than before; for that reason a consideration of this kind holds second place as the second step of contemplation, by which we ought to be lead by hand to contemplate God in all other creatures, which enter our minds through bodily senses. 2. Therefore it must be noted, that this world, which is called a macrocosm, enters our soul, which is called a microcosm, through the gates of the five senses, according to (their) apprehension, enjoyment and dijudication of these sensible (images). That this is clearly so: because in it certain things are generating, certain things generated, certain thing governing the former and the latter. The things generating are the simple bodies, that is the celestial bodies and the four elements. For from the elements by virtue of a light unifying the contrariety of elements in mixtures there has been generated and produced, whatever is generated and produced by the activity of natural virtue. But the things generated are the bodies composed from the elements, as minerals, vegetables, sensibles and human bodies. The things ruling the former and the latter are the spiritual substances whether entirely conjoined, as are the brute animals, or conjoined in a separable manner, as are the rational spirits, or conjoined in an inseparable manner, as are the celestial spirits, whom the philosophers name Intelligences, we the Angles. To whom according to philosophers it pertains to move the celestial bodies, and for this reason to them there is attributed the administration of the universe, taking up

from the First Cause, that is from God, the influence of virtue, which they pour back according to the work of governing, which respects the natural consistency of things. Moreover according to theologians there is attributed to these same the control of the universe according to the empire of the Most High God as much as regards the works of reparation, according to what is called the spirits of administration, sent on account of those who have seized the inheritance of salvation.

3. Man therefore, who is called the microcosm, has five senses like five gates, through which acquaintance with all things, which are in the sensible world, enters into his soul. For through vision there enters bodies sublime and luminous and the other colored things, but through touch bodies solid and terrestrial, indeed through the three intermediary senses there enters intermediary things, as through taste liquids, through hearing gases, through smell vapours, which have something of the humid nature, something of the gaseous, something of the fiery or hot (nature), as is clear in the smoke released from aromatics. Therefore there enters through these gates both simple bodies and also composite ones, from these (which are) mixed. But because in sensing we perceive not only these particular sensibles, which are light, sound, odor, taste and the four primary qualities, which apprehend (our) touch; but also the common sensibles, which are number, magnitude, figure, rest and movement; both "all, which is moved is moved by another" and certain things are moved by themselves and rest, as are the animals: while through those five senses we apprehend the movement of bodies, we are lead by hand towards acquaintance with spiritual movers as through an effect towards acquaintance with its causes.

4. Therefore there enters, as much as regards three genera of things, into the human soul through apprehension, that

whole sensible world. Moreover these exterior sensibles are those which at first step into the soul through the gates of the five senses; they enter, I say, not through substances, but through their similitudes at first generated in the midst and from the midst in the organ and from the exterior organ in the interior, and from this into the apprehensive power; and thus the generation of the species in the midst and from the midst in the organ and the conversion of the apprehensive power over it causes the apprehension of all these which the soul apprehends exteriorly.

5. To this apprehension, if it belongs to something agreeable, there follows enjoyment. Moreover the sense takes delight in the object perceived through the abstract similitude and/or by reason of its beauty, as in sight, and/or by reason of its savor, as in smell and hearing, and/or by reason of its wholesomeness, as in taste and touch, respectively. Moreover every delectation is by reason of its proportionality. But since the species holds the reason for the form, virtue and activity, according to which it has a relation to the beginning, from which it flows, to the middle, through which it passes over, and to the end, in which it acts; for that reason proportionality either is attended in similitude, according to which it accounts for the species or form, and so is called beauty, because "beauty is nothing other than numeric equality", or "a certain one of the parts of position together with the savor of color". Or proportionality attends, inasmuch as it accounts for power or virtue, and so is called savor, when acting virtue does not impropportionately exceed the recipient; because sense is saddened in extremes and takes delight in means. Or it is attended, inasmuch as it accounts for efficacy and impression, which is then proportional, when acting in impressing it fills full the indigence of the one impressed, and this is to save and feed itself, which most appears in taste and touch. And thus through enjoyment exterior

delectables, according to the three fold reason for taking delight, enter into the soul through similitude.

6. After this apprehension and enjoyment there occurs dijudication, by which not only is it distinguished, whether this be white, and/or black, because this pertains to a particular sense; not only, whether it be wholesome, and or noxious, because this pertains to interior sense; but also, because it is distinguished and an account is rendered, why it takes delight in this; and in this act one inquires for a reason for the delectation, which in the sense is perceived from the object. This is moreover, when the reason for the beautiful, savory and wholesome is sought: and one finds that this is the proportion of equality. Moreover the reason for equality is the same in great things and in small and it neither is extended in dimensions nor succeeds or passes over with those things passing over nor is it altered by movements. Therefore it abstracts from place, time and movement, and for this reason it is thoroughly unchangeable, uncircumscribable and entirely spiritual. Therefore dijudication is an action, which causes the sensible species, accepted sensibly through sense, to go into the intellective power by pruning and abstracting (it). And thus, this whole world has to go into the human soul through the gates of the senses according to the three aforesaid activities.

7. Moreover all these are vestiges, in which we gaze upon Our God. For since the species apprehended is a similitude born in the midst and then impressed on the organ itself and through that impression it leads into its beginning, that is into the object with which one is to become acquainted; it manifestly intimates, that that One who is the invisible image of God and the splendor of His glory and the figure of His substance, who is everywhere by His first generation - as an object in the center generates its own similitude - is

united by the grace of union - as a species to the bodily organ - to an individual of rational nature, to lead us back through that union to the Father as to the fontal beginning and object. Therefore as all things with which one can become acquainted have to generate their own species, they manifestly proclaim, that in them as in mirrors can be seen the eternal generation of the Word, the Image and Son eternally emanating from God the Father.

8. According to this manner (of speaking) the species taking delight as one beautiful, savory and wholesome, intimates, that in that first species there is prime beauty, savor and wholesomeness, in which there is most high proportionality and equality to the one generating; in which there is unstaining virtue, not through phantasm, but through the truth of apprehension: in which there is saving impression, expelling both substitutes and every indigence of apprehension. If therefore "delectation is a conjunction of agreeable to agreeable"; and solely the similitude of God accounts most highly for the beautiful, savory and the wholesome; and it is united according to truth and interiority and fullness filling full every capacity: it can manifestly be seen, that in God alone there is fontal and true delectation, and that we are lead by hand to require that from all delectations.

9. Moreover by a more excellent and immediate manner dijudication leads us to gaze upon eternal truth with more certainty. For if dijudication has occurred through reason abstracting from place, time and mutability and for this reason from dimension, succession and transmutation, through immutable and incircumscribable and interminable reason; nothing however is entirely immutable, incircumscribable and interminable, except what is eternal; everything however which is eternal, is God, and/or in God: if therefore all things, however more certainly we distinguish

them, we distinguish through reason of this kind; it is clear, that He himself is the reason for all things and the infallible rule and the light of truth, in which all other things glitters infallibly, indelibly, undoubtedly, unbreakably, indistinguishably, thoroughly unchangeably, unconfinally, interminably, indivisibly, and intellectually. And for that reason those laws, through which we judge with certainty concerning all sensibles, coming into our consideration; although they are infallible and undoubtable by the intellect of the one apprehending (them), indelible from the memory of the one recalling (them) as things always present, unbreakable and indistinguishable by the intellect of the one judging (them), because, as Augustine says "no one judges from them, but through them": it is necessary, that they be thoroughly unchangeable and incorruptible as necessities, unconfinal as uncircumscribed, interminable as eternal, and for this reason indivisible as intellectual and incorporeal (beings), not made, but uncreated, eternally existing in the eternal Art, from which, through which and according to which all shapely things are formed; and for that reason they cannot be with certainty judged except through That which was not only producing all other forms, but also conserving and distinguishing all others, as the Being holding the form and directing the rule over all things, and through Which our mind distinguishes all others, which enter into itself through the senses.

10. Moreover this speculation broadens according to the consideration of seven numerically different things, by which as by seven steps one climbs thoroughly into God, according to that which Augustine (says) in his book *De vera Religione* and in its sixth (chapter) *Musicae*, where he assigns numerically different things climbing step-by-step thoroughly from these sensibles even to the Artisan of all, so that God is seen in all (of them). For he says, that numbers are in bodies and most in sounds and voices, and these he

names notes; that numbers (have been) abstracted from these and received in our senses, and these he names messages; numbers (are) proceeding from the soul into the body, as is clear in gesticulations and gestured-dances, and these he names instructions; that (there are) numbers in the delectations of the sense from the conversion of intention over the species received, and these he names sensations; that numbers (have been) retained in the memory, and these he calls memories; that (there are) even numbers, through which we judge concerning all these things, and these he names judgements, which as has been said are necessarily above the mind as infallibles and indistinguishables. By these moreover there are impressed upon our minds artificial numbers, which nevertheless Augustine does not ennumerate among those steps, because they have been connected with judgements; and from these flow the number instructions, from which are created numerous forms of crafts, so that from most high things through middle things towards the lowest things an ordered descent comes into being. Towards these we also ascend step-by-step by numbers (that are) notes, intervening messages, sensations, and memories. Therefore since all things are beautiful and in a certain manner delectable; and beauty and delectation are not apart from proportion; and proportion is first in numbers: it is necessary, that all things be numerous; and for this reason "number is the foremost exemplar in the mind of the Founder"; and in things the foremost vestige leading to Wisdom. Because when (this vestige) is most evident to all and closest to God, and most closely as through seven differences leads into God and causes, us to acquaint ourselves with Him in all other corporal and sensible things, we at the same time apprehend numerous things, take delight in numerous proportions and judge most securely by means of laws of numerous proportions.

11. From these two first steps, by which we are lead by hand to gaze upon God in (His) vestiges as after the manner of the two wings decending about the feet, we can gather, that all creatures of this sensible world lead the spirit of the one contemplating and tasting (them) into the eternal God, for the reason that of that First Principle most powerful, most wise and best, of that eternal Origin, Light, and Fullness, of that, I say, Art efficient, exemplary and ordering there are shadows, resonances and pictures, there are vestiges, likenesses and spectacles divinely given to us as first premises of a syllogism and signs to survey God; which, I say, are exemplary and/or rather examples, proposed to minds still rough and sensible, to be transferred through the sensibles, which they see, to the intelligibles, which they do not see, as through signs to things signified.

12. Moreover these manner of creatures of this sensible world signify the invisible things of God, partly because God is the Origin, Exemplar and End, of every creature, and (because) every effect is a sign of a cause, and an example of an exemplar, and a way for the end, towards which it leads: partly from itsown representation; partly from a prophetic prefiguration; partly from angelic activity; partly from a superadded institution. For every creature by its nature is a certain likeness and similitude of that eternal Wisdom, and especially those things which have been assumed in the book of Scripture through the spirit of prophecy for the prefiguration of spiritual things; moreover more especially those creatures, in the likeness of which God has willed to appear as an angelic minister; but most especially that which He willed to institute for signification, which not only accounts for the common name of sign, but also of Sacrament.

13. From all of which is gathered, that the invisible things of God from the creatures of the world, through those which

have been made, are perceived as things understood so that those who do not want to advert to these and to acquaint themselves with, bless and love God in all these are inexcusable so long as they do not want to be transferred from darkness into the admirable light of God. But thanks to God through Jesus Christ, Our Lord, who has transferred us from darkness into His own admirable light, while through these lights given exteriorly to the mirror of our mind in which divine things glitter, we dispose (ourselves) to reenter.

Chapter 3 - On the Sight of God Through His Images Marked on Natural Powers

1. Moreover since the two aforesaid steps, by leading us into God through His vestiges, through which He glitters in all other creatures, has lead us by hand even unto this, to reenter ourselves, that is our mind, in which the Divine Image glitters; hence it is that already in the third place, entering our very selves and as if relinquishing the outer entrance hall, in the Holies, that is in the anterior part of the Tabernacle, we ought to begin to see God as through a mirror; where after the manner of a candlestick the Light of Truth glitters upon the face of our mind, in which, that is, the Image of the Most Blessed Trinity glitters again. Enter therefore yourself and see, that your mind most fervently loves itself; nor can it love itself, unless it knows; nor does it know itself, unless it remembers itself, because we can seize nothing through understanding, that is not present among our memory; and from this you advert, that your soul has a threefold power, not in the eye of the flesh, but in the eye of the mind. Therefore consider the activities and characteristics of these three powers, and you can see God through yourself as through an image, which is to see (Him) through a mirror in mystery.

2. Moreover the activity of the memory is the retention and representation not only of things present, corporal and temporal, but also of things coming afterwards, simple and sempiternal. For the memory retains things past through remembrance, things present through capture, things future through foresight. It also retains simple things, like the principles of continuous and discrete quantities, such as point, presence and unity, without which it is impossible to

remember or think of those things which are derived by means of them. Nevertheless it retains the principles and ranks of the sciences, as sempiternal things and in a sempiternal manner, because it can never so forget them, while it uses reason, on the contrary it approves those things heard and assents to them, perceives (them) not as from something new, but recognizes them as things innate and familiar to itself; as is clear, is the self-evident: "The affirmation and/or negation of anything"; and/or "Every whole is greater than its part", and/or whatever other rank, for which there is no contradiction "in accord with internal reason". Therefore from the first actual retention of all temporal things, that is of all things past, present, and future, it has a likeness to eternity, whose indivisible presence extends itself to all times. From the second it appears, that it not only has to be itself formed from the exterior through phantasms, but also from the superior by taking up simple forms, which cannot not enter through the gates of the senses and the phantasies of sensibles. From the third is had, that it has itself a thoroughly unchangeable light present to itself, in which it remembers the truth of invariables. And thus through the activities of memory it appears, that the soul itself is an image and similitude of God, to this extent, that present to itself and having Him present, it seizes Him by act and through power " it is capable of Him and can be a participant" (in Him).

3. Moreover the activity of intellective virtue is in the perception of the understanding of terms, propositions, and illations. Moreover it siezes what is signified by the understanding of terms, when it comprehends, what each thing is by definition. But definition has to occur through things superior, and these latter have to be defined by things superior, until one comes to things supreme and most general, which when ignored, inferiors cannot be definitively understood. Therefore unless what one become acquainted

with what a being is through itself, there cannot be fully a definition of anything of a special substance. Nor can one become acquainted with a being through itself, unless one become acquainted with it together with its conditions, which are: the one, the true, the good. Moreover with being, when it can be thought of as diminished and complete, as imperfect and as perfect, as being in potency and as being in act, as being secundum quid and as being simply-speaking, as partly being and wholly being, as transient being and as stable being, as being through another and as being through itself, as being commingled with non-being as as pure being, as dependent being and as absolute being, as posterior being and as prior being, as mutable being and as immutable being, as simple being as as composite being, since "its privations and defects one can be in nowise become acquainted except through its positions", our intellect does not come to resolve fully the understanding of anything of existing creatures, unless it be aided by the understanding of the most pure, most actual, most complete and absolute being; which is Being simply and eternal, in which there are reasons for all things in its purity. Moreover in what manner does the intellect know, that this being is defective and incomplete, if it has no acquaintance with being apart from any fault? And thus concerning the other things already touched upon. Moreover the intellect is said next to truly comprehend the understanding of propositions, when it knows with certitude, that they are true; and to know this is to know, since it cannot fail in its comprehension. For it knows, that that truth cannot otherwise be regarded; therefore it knows, that that truth is not thoroughly changeable. But since our mind itself is thoroughly changeable, it cannot see that (truth) glittering in so thoroughly an unchangeable manner unless through another light radiating entirely in a thoroughly unchangeable manner, which cannot possibly be a mutable creature. Therefore it knows in that light, which

illuminates every man coming into this world, which is the True Light and the Word in the beginning with God. But our intellect next truly perceives the understanding of illumination, when it sees, that the conclusion follows necessarily from the premises; because not only does it see in necessary terms, but also in contingents, as, if a man runs, a man is moved. Moreover it perceives this necessary characteristic not only in things existing, but also in non-existing ones. For as, with man existing, it follows: if man runs, man is moved; so also, (when) non-existing. Therefore the necessity of illuminations of this manner does not come from the existence of a thing in matter, which is contingent, nor from existence of a thing in the soul, which then would be a fiction, if it did not exist in the thing: therefore it comes from the exemplarity in the eternal Art, according to which the thing has an aptitude and characteristic alternatively according to the eternal Art's representation of it. Therefore, as Augustine says in *De vera religione*, every light of one who reasons truly is enkindled by that Truth and exerts itself to arrive at It. From which it appears manifestly, that our intellect has been conjoined to eternal Truth itself, while it cannot with certitude seize anything truly unless through learning about It. Therefore you can see through yourself the Truth, which teaches you, if concupiscences and phantasms do not impede you and do not interpose themselves as clouds between you and the ray of Truth.

4. Moreover the activity of elective virtue is attended in counsel, judgement and desire. Moreover counsel is in inquiring, what is better this or that. But it is not called better unless through access to the best; however access is according to the greater assimilation; therefore no one knows whether this is better than that, unless he knows, that it is more assimilated to the best. However, no one knows, that anything is assimilated more to another, unless he becomes acquainted with it; for not I do not know, that

this is like Peter, unless I know or become acquainted with Peter; therefore upon everyone giving counsel there is necessarily impressed the notion of the Most High Good. Moreover certain judgement from those able to give counsel es through some law. However no one judges with certainty through law, unless he be certain that that law is upright, and that one ought not judge it; but our mind judges about its very self: therefore since it cannot judge about the law, through which it judges; that law is superior to our mind, and it judges through this, according to that which is impressed upon itself. However nothing is superior to the human mind, except the One alone who made it; therefore in judging our deliverative (power) extends to divine laws, if it would give a full explanation. Moreover desire is principally for that which most moves it. However that moves most which loves most; however to be blessed is loved most; however to be blessed is not had except through the best and last end: therefore human desire seeks after nothing except because (it is) the Most High Good, and/or because it is for That, and/or because it has come likeness to It. So great is the force of the Most High Good, that nothing can be loved by a creature except through a desire for It, which (creature) thereby fails and errs, since it accepts a likeness and imitation in place of the Truth. Therefore see, in what manner the soul is nigh to God, and in what manner the memory leads into eternity, the intelligence into Truth, the elective power into the Most High Goodness according to their activities.

5. Moreover according to the order and origin and characteristic of these powers (the soul) leads into the Most Blessed Trinity Itself. For from memory there arises intelligence as its offspring, because we next understand, since the similitude, which is in the memory, results in the keenness of the intellect, which is nothing other than a word; from memory and intelligence is spirated love as the

connexion of both. These three, that is the generating mind, word, and love, are in the soul in regard to the memory, intelligence and the will, which are consubstantial, coeternal and coeval, circumcensing one another. Therefore if the perfect God is a spirit, He has memory, intelligence and will, He has also a begotten Word and a spirated Love, which are necessarily distinguished, since one is produced from the other, not essentially, not accidentally, therefore personally. Therefore while the mind considers its very self, through itself as through a mirror it rises together to gaze upon the Blessed Trinity of the Father, the Word and the Love, of the three coeternal, coequal and consubstantial persons, so that whoever in whomever is of the others, is nevertheless one not the other, but the three themselves are the One God.

6. Towards this speculation which the soul has concerning its own beginning, triune and one through the trinity of its powers, through which it is an image of God, one is assisted through the lights of the sciences, which perfect it and inform it and represent the Most Blessed Trinity in a threefold manner. For every philosophy either is natural, or rational, or moral. The first deals with the cause of existing, and for that reason leads into the power of the Father; the second with the reason for understanding, and for that reason leads into the wisdom of the Word; the third with the order of living, and for that reason leads into the goodness of the Holy Spirit. Again, the first is divided into metaphysics, mathematics and physics. And the first concerns the beings of things, the second numbers and figures, the third natures, virtues and diffuse activities. And for that reason the first leads into the First Principle, the Father, the second into His Image, the Son, the third into the gift of the Holy Spirit. The second is divided into grammar, which makes us able to express; into logic, which makes us perspicacious to argue; into rhetoric, which makes us skillful to persuade or move. And this similarly intimates the

mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity Itself. The third is divided into the monastic, the domestic and the political. And for that reason the first intimates the unbegottenness of the First Principle, the second the Son's being-in-a-family, the third the liberality of the Holy Spirit.

7. Moreover all these sciences have certain and infallible rules as lights and rays descending from the eternal law in our mind. And for that reason our mind irradiated and superfused by so great splendors, unless it be blind, can be lead by hand through its very self to contemplate that eternal light. Moreover the irradiation and consideration of this light suspends wise men into admiration and conversely it leads the foolish, who do not believe, that they do understand, into confusion, to fulfill that prophetic (word): Thou illuminating from eternal mountains, have unsettled the foolish of heart.

Chapter 4 - On the Sight of God in His Image Reformed by Gratuitous Gifts

1. But since not only when passing over through us, but also in us does it happen that the First Principle is contemplated.; and this is greater than the preceeding: for that reason this fourth manner of considering reaches the step of contemplation. Moreover it is wonderful to see, when it is shown, that God is so close to our minds, because to so few does it belong to gaze upon the First Principle in their very selves. But the reason (for this) is easy, because the human mind, distracted by cares, does not enter into itself through memory; beclouded by phantasms, it does not go back towards itself through intelligence; enticed by concupiscences, it turns back not at all towards itself through a desire for internal savor and spiritual gladness. For that reason lying down totally in these senses, it cannot reenter into itself as into an image of God.

2. And since, where one has fallen, there he will inevitably fall down again, unless someone places himself nearby and lies by its side, to raise him; our soul could not be perfectly revealed by these senses to survey itself and the eternal Truth in its very self, unless the Truth, having assumed a human form in Christ, became by Its own power the stairway repairing the prior stairway, which had been broken in Adam

For that reason, howevermuch one be illuminated by the light of nature and acquired knowledge, one cannot enter into himself, to delight in his very self in the Lord, unless by means of Christ, who says: I am the door. He who goes within through Me, shall be saved and he will step in and out and find pasture. Moreover we do not approach towards this door, unless we believe, hope and love. It is therefore

necessary, if we want to reenter to the fruition of Truth as to paradise, that we step in through faith, hope and love of the Mediator of God and man, Jesus Christ, who is as the tree of life in the midst of paradise.

3. Therefore the image of our mind must be put on by the three theological virtues, by which the soul is purified, and thus the image is reformed and is conformed to the supernal Jerusalem and made a part of the Church militant, which is, according to the Apostle, the offspring of the heavenly Jerusalem. For he said: That which is on high is that free Jerusalem which is our mother. Therefore the soul, believing, hoping and loving Jesus Christ, who is the incarnate, uncreated and inspired word, that is the way, the truth and the life: while through faith it believes in Christ as in the uncreated Word, which is the Word and splendor of the Father, it recovers its spiritual hearing and sight, hearing to perceive the sermons of Christ, sight to consider the splendors of His light. Moreover when by hope it longs to capture the inspired Word, through desire and affection it recovers its spiritual smell. While by charity it holds fast the incarnate Word, as one taking delight from Him and as one passing over into Him through ecstatic love, it recovers taste and touch. With which senses having been recovered, while it sees and listens to its spouse, it smells, tastes and embraces Him, as a bride can sing repeatedly the Canticle of Canticles, which had been written for the exercise of contemplation according to this fourth step, which no one lays hold of, except he who accepts it, because there is more in affectual experience than in rational consideration. For on this step, with its interior senses repaired to sense the Most High Beauty, to hear the Most High Harmony, to smell the Most High Fragrance, to take a taste of the Most High Savor, to apprehend the Most High Delectable, the soul is disposed towards mental excesses, that is through devotion, admiration and exultation, accord to those three

exclamations, which are made in the Canticle of Canticles. Of which the first occurs through an abundance of devotion, through which the soul becomes as a stream of smoke (rising) from aromatics of myrrh and incense: the second through excellence of admiration, through which the soul becomes as dawn, moon and sun, according to the process of illuminations suspending the soul to admire the spouse (thus) considered; the third through a superabundance of exsulation, through which the soul becomes affluent with the most savory delights of delectation, leaning totally upon its beloved.

4. Which when attained, our spirit is made hierarchical to climb thoroughly on high according to its conformity to that supernal Jerusalem, in which no one enters, unless it descends first into the heart by grace, as John saw in his Apocalypse. Moreover it descends next into the heart, when through reformation of the image, through the theological virtues and through the enjoyments of the spiritual senses and the suspensions of excesses our spirit is made hierarchical, that is purged, illuminated and perfected. - So also by nine steps of orders is (the soul) marked, while in it, in an orderly manner, there is arranged announcement, dictation, duction, ordination, reinforcement, command, undertaking, revelation, unction, which step-by-step corresponds to the nine orders of Angels, so that the first of the aforesaid three steps pertain in the human mind to nature, the three following to skill, and the last three to grace. Which when had, the soul by entering into its very self, enters into the supernal Jerusalem, where considering the orders of the Angels, it sees in them the God, who dwelling in them works all their operations. Whence says (Saint) Bernard ad Eugenium, that " God in the Seraphim loves as charity, in the Cherubim knows as truth, in the Thrones sits as equity, in the Dominations dominates as majesty, in the Principalities rules as Principle, in the Powers

guards as health, in the Virtues works as virtue, in the Archangels reveals as light, in the Angels assists as piety". From all of which it is seen that God is all in all through contemplation of Him in minds, in which He dwells by the gifts of the most affluent charity.

5. Moreover the consideration of Sacred Scripture, divinely sent forth, is especially and chiefly supported upon speculating on (this) step, as philosophy was on the preceeding. For Sacred Scripture principally concerns the workds of reparation. Whence it also chiefly deals with faith, hope and charity, though which virtues the soul has to be reformed, and most especially with charity. Of which the Apostle says, that it is the end of the precept, according to that which is in a pure heart and a good conscience and in an unfeigned faith. It is the fullness of the Law, as says the same (author). And Our Savior asserts that the whole Law and the Prophets hang upon these two precepts, that is upon the love of God and of neighbor; which two bow their heads to the one spouse of the Church, Jesus Christ, who is at the same time neighbor and God, at the same time brother and lord, at the same time also king and friend, at the same time uncreated and incarnate Word, our former and reformer, as the Alpha and the Omega; who is also the Most High Hierarchy, purging and illuminating and perfecting the bride, that is the whole Church and every holy soul.

6. Therefore concerning this hierarch and ecclesiastical hierarch is the whole Sacred Scripture, through which we are taught how to be purged, illuminated and perfected, and this according to the threefold law handed down in Her, that is of nature, of Scripture and of grace; and/or rather according to Her threefold principle part, that is the Mosaic law purging, the prophetic revelation brightening and the evangelic teaching perfecting; or more rather according to Her threefold spiritual intelligence: the tropologic which

purges for honesty of life; the allegoric, which illumines for clarity of intelligence; the anagogic, which perfects through mental excesses and the most savory perceptions of wisdom, according to the aforesaid three theological virtues and reformed spiritual senses and the three above said excesses and the hierarchic acts of the mind, by which our mind steps back to interior things, to gaze upon God there in the splendors of the Saints and in them as in beds to sleep in peace and rest, with the spouse having promised on oath, that she will not be roused, until she comes forth by His will.

7. Moreover from these two middle steps, through which we step in to contemplate God within us as in the reflections of the images of creatures, and this as if according to the manner of wings outstretched to fly, which hold a middle place, we can understand, that in divine things we are lead by hand through the powers of the rational soul itself, naturally engrafted as much as regards their activities, characteristics and habits of knowledge; according to what appears from the third step. We are also lead by hand through the powers of the soul itself reformed - and this by gratuitous virtues - by the spiritual senses and mental excesses; as is clear from the fourth (step). Nevertheless we are lead by hand through hierarchical activities, that is of the purgation, illumination and perfection of human minds, through the hierarchichal revelations of the Sacred Scriptures given to us through the Angels, according to that (saying) of the Apostle, that the Law has been given through the Angels into the hand of the Mediator. And last in order we are lead by hand through hierarchs and hierarchical orders, which have to be arrainged in our mind after the likeness of the supernal Jerusalem.

8. Having been filled full by all of which intellectual lights our mind, is inhabited by Divine Wisdom as a house of God,

made a daughter, bride and friend of God; made a member, sister and coheir with Christ the Head; made nevertheless the temple of the Holy Spirit, founded through faith, elevated through hope and dedicated to God through holiness of mind and body. Which together causes the most sincere charity for Christ, which is diffused in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us, without which Spirit we cannot know the secrets of God. For as what are of a man no one can know except the spirit of the man, which is in him; so also what are of God no one can know except the Spirit of God. In charity therefore we are rooted and founded, to be able to comprehend with all the Saints, what is the length of the eternity, what is breadth of the liberality, what is the sublimity of the majesty and what is the depth of the wisdom of the Judge.

Chapter 5 - On the Sight of the Divine Unity Through Its Primary Name, Which is Being

1. Moreover since it happens that God is contemplated not only outside of us and within us, but also above us: outside through vestige, within through image and above through the light of Eternal Truth, since "our mind itself is formed immediately by Truth Itself"; those who have been exercised in the first manner, have entered already into the entrance-hall before the tabernacle; but they who in the second, have entered into the holies; moreover they who in the third, enter with the supreme Pontiff into the Holy of Holies; where above the ark are the Cherubim of glory overshadowing the propitiatory; through which we understand two manners or steps of contemplating the invisible and eternal things of God, of which one hovers around the things essential to God, but the other around the things proper to the persons.

2. The first manner at first and principally fixes its power of sight upon being itself, saying, that He who is is the first Name of God. The second manner fixes its gaze upon the good itself, saying, that this is the first Name of God. The first looks most powerfully towards the Old Testament, which preaches most the unity of the Divine Essence; whence it is said by Moses: I am who am; according to the New, which determines the plurality of persons, by baptising in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. For that reason Christ Our Teacher, wanting to raise the youth, who observed the Law, towards evangelical perfection, attributed the name of goodness to God principally and precisely. No one he said, is good except God alone. Therefore (St. John) Damascene following Moyses says, that He who is is the first Name of God; (St.) Dionysius (the

Areopagite) following Christ says, that the Good is the first Name of God.

3. Wanting therefore to contemplate the invisible things of God in regard to (their) unity of essence it first fixes its power of sight upon being itself and sees, that being itself to this extent is in itself most certain, because it cannot be thought not to be, because most pure being itself does not occur except in full flight from non-being, as even nothing is in full flight from being. Therefore as it has entirely nothing from being or from its conditions; so conversely being itself has nothing from non-being, neither in act nor in power, nor according to the truth of a thing nor according to our estimation. Moreover since non-being is a privation of existing, it does not fall into the intellect except through being; moreover being does not fall through another, because everything, which is understood, either is understood as not a being, or as a being in potency, or as a being in act. If therefore non-being cannot be understood except through a being, and a being in potency not except through a being in act; and being names the pure act itself of a being: therefore being is what first falls in an intellect, and being is that which is a pure act. But this is not particular being, which is analogous being, because it has the least from act, in this that it is the least. It follows therefore, that that being is the divine being.

4. Wonderful therefore is the blindness of the intellect, which does not consider that which it sees first and without which it can become acquainted with nothing. But as eye intent upon various differences of colors does not see the light, through which it sees other things, and if it sees it, it does not advert to it; so the eye of our mind, intent upon particular and universal beings, though being itself, outside of every genus, first occurs to the mind and through it other things, it does not however advert to it. Whence it most truly

appears, that "as the eye of the evening holds itself towards the light, so the eye of our mind holds itself towards the most manifest things of nature"; because accustomed to the shadows of beings and to the phantasms of sensibles, when it surveys the light itself of Most High Being, it seems to it that it sees nothing; not understanding, that that darkness is the Most High Illumination of our mind, as, when the eye sees pure light, it seems to it that it sees nothing.

5. Therefore see that most pure being, if you can, and it occurs to you, that it cannot be thought of as accepted from another; and for this reason it is necessarily thought of as first in every manner, because it can be neither from nothing nor from anything. For what is it through itself, if being itself is not through itself nor from itself? It occurs also to you that (it is) lacking entirely non-being and for this reason as never beginning, never stopping, but eternal. It occurs to you also that it has in no manner (anything) in itself, except that which is being itself, and for this reason that it has been composed with nothing, but is most simple. It occurs to you that it has nothing of possibility, because every possible has in some manner something from non-being, and for this reason that it is most actual. It occurs that it has nothing of defectibility, and for this reason that it is most perfect. It occurs lastly that it has nothing of diversification, and for this reason that it is most highly one.

Being therefore, which is pure being and simply being and absolute being, is primary, eternal, most simple, most actual, most perfect and most highly one being.

6. And these are so certain, that the opposite of these cannot be thought by understanding being itself, and one necessarily infers the other. For because it is simply being, for that reason it is simply first; because it is simply first, for that reason it is not made from another, nor can it be from

its very self, therefore it is eternal. Likewise, because it is first and eternal; for that reason it is not from others, therefore it is most simple. Likewise, because it is first, eternal, most simple; for that reason there is nothing in it of possibility mixed with act, for that reason it is most actual. Likewise, because it is first, eternal, most simple, most actual; therefore it is most perfect; as such it entirely fails in nothing, nor can there be anything added to it. Because it is first, eternal, most simple, most actual, most perfect; for that reason most highly one. For what is through a superabundance in every manner is said to be in respect to all things. " Also what is through superabundance simply-speaking is not said to be possibly comprised except in only one thing" Whence if God names primary, eternal, most simple, most actual, most perfect being; it is impossible that it is thought to not to be, nor to be except as only one thing. Listen therefore, O Israel, God thy God is one. If you see this in the pure simplicity of (your) mind, you will in some-wise be filled with the brightening of eternal light.

7. But you have that from which you will be lifted into admiration. For being itself is first and last, is eternal and most present, is most simple and greatest, is most actual and most immutable, is most perfect and immense, is most highly one and nevertheless in every measure. If you wonder at these things with a pure mind, you shall be filled with a greater light, while you see further, that it is for that reason last, because it is first. For because it is first, it works all things on account of its very self; and for that reason it is necessary, that it be the last end, the start and the consummation, the Alpha and Omega. For that reason it is the most present, because it is eternal. For because it is eternal, it does not flow from another nor fails by its very self nor runs down from one thing into another: therefore it has neither a past nor a future, but only a present being. For that reason it is greatest, because it is most simple. For because

it is most actual, for that reason it is pure act; and what is such acquires nothing new, loses no habit, and for this reason cannot be changed. For that reason it is immense, because it is most perfect. For because it is most perfect, it can think of nothing better, more noble, nor more worthy beyond itself, and for this reason nothing greater; and everything that is such is immense. For that reason it is in every measure, because it is most highly one. For what is most highly one, is the universal principle of every multitude; and for this reason it is the universal efficient, exemplary and final cause of all things, as "the cause of existing, the reason of understanding and the order of living". Therefore it is in every measure not as the essences of all things, but as the most superexcellent and most universal cause of the essences of all others; whose virtue, because it is most highly united in an essence, is for that reason most highly most infinite and most manifold in efficacy.

8. Returning again (to this) let us say: that therefore most pure and absolute being, which is simply being, is primary and last. Because it is eternal and most present, for that reason it encompasses and enters all durations, as if existing at the same time as their center and circumferences. Because it is most simple, for that reason wholly within all and wholly outside, and for this reason it is an intelligible sphere, whose center is everywhere and circumferences nowhere. Because it is most actual and most immutable, for that reason remaining stable it grants all to move. Because it is most perfect and immense, for that reason it is within all things, not as included, outside of all things, not as excluded, above all things, not as lifted up, below all things, not as prostrated. But because it is most highly one and in every measure, for that reason it is all in all although all things be many and itself is not but one; and this, because through the most simple unity, the most serene truth, it is

every exemplarity and every communicability; and for this reason from Him and through Him and in Him are all things and this, because it is omnipotent, omniscient and in every measure good, which to see perfectly is to be blessed, as is said by Moses: Therefore show Thyself to be every good thing.

Chapter 6 - On the Sight of the Most Blessed Trinity in His Name, Which is The Good

1. After the consideration of essentials the eye of the intelligence is lifted up to survey the Most Blessed Trinity, as the other Cherub placed alongside the other. Moreover as being itself is the radical principle and name of the vision of essentials, through which the others become known; so the good itself is the most principle foundation of the contemplation of emanations.

2. Therefore see and attend since the best is simply that than which nothing better can be thought; and thus it is such, because it cannot be rightly thought to not to be, because being is entirely better than non being; thus it is, that it cannot rightly be thought, rather let it be thought as triune and one. For "the good is said to be diffusive of itself"; therefore the Most High Good is most highly diffusive of Itself. However the most high diffusion cannot be, unless it be actual and intrinsic, substantial and hypostatic, natural and voluntary, liberal and necessary, unfailing and perfect. Therefore unless there be eternally in the Most High Good an actual and consubstantial production, and a hypostatis equally noble, as is one producing through the manner of generation and spiration - so that it be the eternal (production) of an eternally co-principating principle - so that it be beloved, co-beloved, begotten and spirated, that is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; it would never be the Most High Good, because it would not diffuse itself most highly. For there is no diffusion in time into creatures except (when it is) central and/or punctual in respect to the immensity of eternal goodness; whence also can any diffusion be thought greater than those, namely these, in

which diffusing itself it communicates to another its whole substance and nature. Therefore it would not be the Most High good, if in reality, or intellect it could be lacking (anything). Therefore if you can with the eye of your mind survey the purity of goodness, which is the pure act of the Principle loving in a charitable manner with a love, free and owed and commingled from both, which is the fullest diffusion in the manner of nature and will, which is a diffusion in the manner of the Word, in which all things are said to be, and in the manner of the Gift, in whom all other gifts are given; (then) you can see, that through the most high communicability of the good the Trinity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is necessary. In whom it is necessary on account of the Most High Goodness being the Most High Communicability, and from the Most High Communicability the Most High Consubstantiality, and from the Most High Consubstantiality the Most High Configurability, and from these the Most High Co-equality, and for this reason the Most High Co-eternity, and from all the aforesaid the Most High Co-intimacy, by which one is in the other necessarily through the Most High Circumincession and one works with the other through an in-every-measure indivision of substance and virtue and activity of the Most Blessed Trinity itself.

3. But when you contemplate these, see, that you do not consider yourself able to comprehend the incomprehensible. For in these six conditions you still have to consider what leads the eye of our mind vehemently into the stupor of admiration. For there is the Most High Communicability together with the property of the Persons, the Most High Consubstantiality together with the plurality of the hypostases, the Most High Configurability together with discrete personality, the Most High Co-equality together with order, the Most High Co-eternity together with emanation, the Most High Co-intimacy together with

emission. Who at the sight of so great wonders does not rise up with others in admiration? But all these we most certainly understand to be in the Most Blessed Trinity, if we raise our eyes to the most superexcellent Goodness. For if there is a most high communication and true diffusion, there is a true origin and a true distinction; and because the whole is communicated, not the part; for that reason that which is given, is what is had, and it is the whole; therefore emanating and producing, they are both distinguished in properties, and are essentially one. Therefore because they are distinguished in properties, for that reason they have personal properties and a plurality of hypostates and an emanation of origin and order not of posteriority, but of origin, and an emission not of local change, but by the gratuity of inspiration, on account of the authority of the one producing, which the one being sent has in respect to being sent. But because they are substantially one, for that reason it is proper, that there be a unity in essence and in form and dignity and eternity and existence and incircumscribability. Therefore while you consider these things singly through themselves, you have that from which is the truth you contemplate; while comparing these one to another, you have that from which you are suspended into the highest admiration; and for that reason, as your mind ascends through admiration into admirable contemplation, these things must be considered at the same time.

4. For the Cherubim, who were looking at one another, also designate this. Nor was this free from mystery, because they looked backwards at each other in the face upon the propitiatory, to verify that which the Lord says in (the Gospel of) John: This is eternal life, to know Thee the only True God, and how Thou has sent Jesus Christ For we ought to admire not only the conditions of God, essential and personal in Himself, but also through comparison to the superwonderful union of God and man in the unity of the person of Christ.

5. For if you are a Cherub in contemplating the essentials of God, and your wonder, because at the same time the Divine Being is first and last, eternal and most present, most simple and greatest or uncircumscribed, wholly everywhere and never comprehended, most actual and never moved, most perfect and having nothing superfluous nor diminished, and nevertheless immense and infinite without terminus, Most Highly One, and nevertheless in every measure, as having all things in Himself, as all virtue, all truth, all good; look back towards the propitiatory and wonder, that in Himself the First Principle has been joined with the last, God with the man formed on the sixth day, the Eternal One has been joined with temporal man, in the fullness of times born from the Virgin, the Most Simple with the most highly composite, the Most Actual with the one who has most highly suffered and died, the Most Perfect and Immense with the limited, the Most Highly One and in every measure with the individual composite and distance from all others, that is with the Man Christ Jesus.

6. Moreover if you are the other Cherub by contemplating the things proper to the Persons, and you wonder, that communicability is together with property, consubstantiality together with plurality, configurability together with personality, co-equality together with order, co-eternality together with production, co-intimacy together with emission, because the Son has been sent from the Father, and the Holy Spirit from them both, who nevertheless is with them and never recedes from them; look back upon the propitiatory and wonder, because in Christ there stands a personal union together with a trinity of substances and a duality of natures; there stands an in-every-measure consensus together with a plurality of wills, there stands a co-predication of God and man together with a plurality of properties, there stands co-adoration together with a plurality of nobilities, there stands a co-exaltation above all

things together with a plurality of dignities, there stands a co-domination together with a plurality of powers.

7. Moreover in this consideration there is a perfection of the illumination of the mind, while as in on the sixth day one sees that man has been made after the image of God. For if the image is an expressive similitude, while our mind contemplates it in Christ the Son of God, who is the invisible Image of God by nature, our humanity so wonderfully exalted, so ineffably united, by seeing that at the same time it is the first and last One, most high and most deep, circumference and center, the Alpha and the Omega, the caused and the cause, the Creator and the creature, that is the book written inside and out; it has already arrived at a certain perfect thing, as one who arrives together with God at the perfection of his illuminations on the sixth step as if on the sixth day, nor does anything more ample now follow except the day of rest, in which through an excess of the mind the perspicacity of the human mind rests from every work, which one accomplished.

Chapter 7 - On the Mental and Mystical Excess, In Which Rest is Given to the Intellect by an Affection Passing Wholly Into God Through Excess

1. Therefore with these six considerations having run out as the six steps of the throne of the true Solomon, by which one arrives at peace, where the true Pacifier rests in a pacifying mind as if in the interior of Jerusalem; as if also by six wings of the Cherub, by which the mind of the true contemplative is able to be driven above by a full brightening of supernal wisdom; as if also on the first six days, in which the mind has to be exercised, to arrive at last to the sabbath of quiet; after which our mind has surveyed God outside of Himself through vestiges and in vestiges, within Himself through image and in image, above Himself through a similitude of the divine light glittering above us and in that light itself, according to that which is possible according to the state of the way and the exercise of our mind; when one arrives so far on the sixth step to this, that in the First and Most High Principle and the Mediator of God and men, Jesus Christ, one gazes upon those things the like of which can in nowise be discovered among creatures, and which exceed every perspicacity of the human intellect: it follows, that this (mind) by gazing transcends and passes over not only this sensible world, but also its very self; in which transit Christ is the Way and the Gate, Christ is the Stair and the Vehicle as the propitiatory located above the ark of God and the Sacrament hidden from the ages.

2. Towards which propitiatory he who looks at it with a full conversion of face, by looking at him suspended upon the

Cross through faith, hope and charity, devotion, admiration, exultation, appreciation, praise and jubilation; makes the Passover, that is the transit, together with Him, to pass over the Red Sea through the rod of the Cross, from Egypt entering the desert, where he tastes the hidden bread, and rests together with Christ upon the funeral mound as if exteriorly dead, sensing, nevertheless, as much as is possible according to the state of the way, that there is said to the thief hanging on a cross with Christ: Today you shall be with Me in Paradise.

3. Which also has been shown to blessed Francis, when in an excess of contemplation on the exalted mountain - where those things, which have been written, he treated with his mind - there appeared the Seraph of six wings fastened upon a cross, as I and many others have heard about in the same place from his companion, who was with him at that time; where he passed over into God through an excess of contemplation; and has been placed as an example of perfect contemplation; as first he had been of action, as if another Jacob and Israel, so that God may invite all truly spiritual men through him to a transit of this kind and an excess of the mind more by example than by word.

4. Moreover in this transit, if one be perfect, it is proper that all intellectual activities be relinquished, and the whole apex of affection be transferred and transformed into God. However this is mystical and most secret, because no one knows it, except him who accepts it, nor does he accept it unless he be one who desires it, nor does he desire it unless he be one whom the fire of the Holy Spirit, which Christ sent upon earth, inflames to the marrow of his bones. And for that reason the Apostle says, that this mystical wisdom has been revealed by the Holy Spirit.

5. Therefore since for this reason there can be nothing by nature, a limited amount by industry, a little by investigation, and much by unction; little must be given to the tongue, and most to internal gladness; little must be given by word and by writing, and the whole by a gift of God, that is by the Holy Spirit; little or nothing must be given to the creature, and the whole to the creative Essence, to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, by saying with (Saint) Dionysius (the Areopagite) to God the Trinity: "O Trinity super-essential and super-God and super-best of the Christians, inspector of Godly-wisdom, direct us into the super-unknown and super-shining and most sublime vertex of mystical speech; where the new and absolute and ineffable (because they are super-shining) mysteries of theology are hidden secretly in the greatest obscurity of the silence that teaches a super-splendant darkness, because it is the most super-manifest, and that in which everything glitters, and (which) super-fulfills invisible intellects with the splendors of invisible super-goods". This to God. However to his friend these things are written, said together with the former: "Moreover you, O friend, concerning mystical visions, having been strengthened on the journey, desert both the senses and the intellectual activities, both sensibles and invisibles and everything not a being and a being, and unknowingly restore (yourself) to the unity, as is possible, of Him, who is above every essence and knowledge. For indeed deserting all things and absolved from all, you do ascend by yourself and by (that which is) unboundable by all and by an absolute excess of pure mind, to the super-essential ray of divine shadows".

6. Moreover if you seek, in what manner these things occur, interrogate grace, not doctrine, desire, not understanding; the groan of praying, not the study of reading; the spouse, not the teacher; God, not man, darkness, not brightness; not light, but the fire totally inflamming, transferring one into

God both by its excessive unctions and by its most ardent affections. Who indeed is the God of fire, and whose forge is in Jerusalem, and Christ ignites this in the fervor, of His most ardent Passion, which He alone truly perceived, who said: My soul has chosen suspense, and my bones death. He who loves this death can see God, because it is indubitably true: No man will see Me and live. Therefore let us die and step into the darkness, let us put on silence with its cares, and concupiscences and phantasms; let us pass over together with Christ Crucified from this world to the Father, that, by showing us the Father, we may say with Phillip: It suffices for us; let us hear with Paul: My grace is sufficient for you; let us exult with David saying: My flesh and my heart failed, God of my heart and my portion God forever. Blessed be the Lord forever, and let every people say: Fiat, Fiat. Amen.

About This eBook

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